

## Local Government Financial Information Communication, Citizenry Awareness and Empowerment in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The impact of the federal and state governments is felt by the citizens through infrastructural provision of the local governments, because local governments are governments at the grassroots. The citizens are not feeling this impact, so this paper set out to survey the effect of local government's financial information communication on infrastructural provision and the empowerment of the citizens. Thirteen local governments out of 27 from Imo State, Nigeria were used as a case study. Data was collected by the use of questionnaire on 1840 respondents and analysed using SPSS software and reported in figures, tables and graphs. The study found that the citizens are aware of the infrastructure that would generate employment for them if available. The citizens also have 5 most acceptable sources of information. A model of financial information communication, financial information awareness and citizenry economic empowerment was developed after the study. As of compulsion, allocated and generated finances of local governments should be made available for public consumption every quarter. The federal government should promulgate a law making it compulsory for the local governments to make their activities and plans known to their citizens.

**Key Words:** Financial information, Citizenry empowerment, Economic empowerment, Infrastructural development, Information communication

### Introduction

Communication of financial transactions of local governments is one of the ways to show a transparent utilization of the resources. Awareness of local government financial information and its communication could help in the provision of infrastructure which might eventually result into local government's development and citizenry empowerment. Using Nigeria as a case study, with its rich oil resources and vast arable land for agriculture, Nigeria should be able to provide jobs for its citizens or at least provide the enabling environment for gainful self – employment. Local governments in Nigeria receive 20% allocation from the Federation Account and 10% from the state in addition to internally generated revenue, yet the citizens are not empowered to be independent through infrastructural development. These resources, if properly managed, are supposed to generate employment both in the public and private sectors.

The mode of information communication is as important as the information communicated. The level of civilization of those to be communicated should be considered when information is communicated. Rural dwellers are not as exposed as those in the townships, so their media of information dissemination should not be sophisticated. National e-Government Strategy (NeGST) launched in 2004 to “create a practical strategy and a single architecture to guide the evolution of digital government solutions with consistent standards, operating platforms and applications across agencies and government systems” is a good step towards transparency but it has its limitations. It is intra-governmental; the citizens in the rural areas especially the illiterates are excluded from participation by poverty and by lack of infrastructure, education, and ICT facility. In addition to e-government, in order to improve the services provided by local governments to its citizens, document management and infrastructural upgrades are key areas to focus attention on.

One of the ways to ensure the development of local governments is by provision of adequate social infrastructure (Oviasuyi, Idada, and Isiraojie 2010). Good accessible roads help move people and goods to markets, improve business competitiveness, and allow the economy to grow and prosper. Other public infrastructure, such as cultural and recreational facilities, clean drinking water systems, and health facilities, improve public health and enhance the quality of life (Godwin 2008; World Bank 1984). Generally, provision of infrastructure which includes, but not limited to housing, roads, bridges, schools, markets, health facilities, electricity, water treatment, parks, and other facilities enumerated in Nigerian constitution as the duties of local governments (Constitution FRN, 1999) are effective means to boost economic activity and create employment for the unemployed especially the youths. Provision of infrastructure in many local government areas in Imo State is mere paper work. The intention of the Federal Government in the creation of local governments is to develop the rural areas (Oviasuyi, Idada and Isiraojie, (2010); Nigerian 1979 Consitution; Agbakoba and

Ogbonna (2004). Local governments are governments at the grassroots.

Communities' awareness and access to information is crucial in the development of local government areas in Imo state. The citizens' reactions to events in the communities in Imo state raise a big doubt to their awareness of the activities of their local governments. Although one could be aware of a piece of information without direct communication from the source. Therefore, information awareness is one thing and its communication is another. How information gets to the citizens could alter its meaning and therefore be misconstrued. Therefore, the channel through which the government communicates to its citizens is crucial in local government financial and other information communication. Channel of information communication may determine its usability because when information is communicated through the right channel the receivers understand and eventually apply it. Awareness of local government's financial capability by the citizenry may influence the local government management to utilize the resources to provide necessary infrastructure that may keep the citizens within their localities.

Imo State is one of the 774 states of Nigeria. It was created on February 3, 1976 out from the old East Central State (when Nigeria was made up of only 12 States) with a population of 3, 934, 899 as at the year 2006 (Source: National Population Commission, 2012; NBS, 2008). General observation has shown that local government areas in Imo state are underdeveloped. The citizens often complain that they were not aware, neither were they informed, of what accrued to their local governments from the federal government or what was internally generated and how the allocations were spent. Rate of development seem not to be proportionate to the rumoured allocations made to the local governments. This study, therefore, seeks to provide empirical evidence for the true state of affairs in Imo State as it pertains to how local governments communicate financial information to their citizens, the level of awareness of citizens of this information, and the degree to which local governments have been able to use the financial allocation accruing to the state to better the lives of their citizens.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the importance of local government's financial information communication;
2. Ascertain the influence of local governments' financial information in the development of Imo State's local governments;
3. Illustrate the influence of local government financial information communication on the empowerment of Imo State's citizenry;
4. Formulate a model of local government – citizenry relationship in local government development.
- 5.

### **Research Questions**

In order to get answers to achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions are asked:

- 1 What is the relationship between the local governments' financial information communication pattern and citizenry awareness of the local government financial transactions in Imo State?
- 2 What is the relationship between awareness of local government financial transactions and empowerment of citizens in the selected local government areas in Imo State?

Other related questions are embedded in these two questions but were elucidated in the questionnaire used to obtain the data for the research.

### **Literature Review**

The perceived outcome of use of financial information upon the provision of infrastructure and eventually the creation of employment as a result of it is the primary concern and focus of this research. Infrastructural development is foreseen as empowers citizens' engagement and settlement. Literature was revealed along this line.

### **Functions of the Local Governments**

According to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the government has a lot of responsibilities for its citizens which are clearly listed in the Fourth Schedule (FRN Constitution, 1999, Fourth Schedule). According to the Nigerian constitution, the main functions of any local government council are summed up in the generation of funds, utilization of government's allocated funds for the maintenance of social infrastructure and provision of amenities for its citizens.

### **Financial Information Communication in the Local Governments**

For effective flow of information from the local government to the citizens, Martin (2003), and Albert and Isife (2010) ascertained that traditional leaders, local leaders, community groups (village groups), community

development councils, and youth leaders, and other people groups in the villages should be engaged. Where the local governments disseminate information through the mass media, there may be no evidence of feedback, etc. (Saevaes 2004). Good governance entails accountability, transparency, and open information systems as well as participation.

Local governments are expected to have a more visible and direct impact on the citizens of its location (Chizea and Ubhenin, 2009). This impact should be seen in two major components namely, provision of social services as listed in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution and on effective local government's planning, development and investment. These are pointers to local government's development, and their effectiveness and positive impact to the citizens are the measures of the local government's achievements. Are the local governments performing this function as expected? Communication of the financial resources of the local governments could help in answering this question. If citizens and all government functionaries have the knowledge of how much money accrues to the local government, and how much revenue the local government generates, they may ask questions as to their use.

### **Information Awareness, Utilization and Development**

There should be a direct correlation between information awareness and local government development. This is the position of Harande (2009) when he stated that "lack of development has a positive correlation with the neglect of rural areas". Alegbeleye and Aina (1985: p.13) reiterated the fact that the Third World countries have realized "that unless the rural areas are well developed, hardly will any meaningful development occur in these countries". Therefore a conscious and sustainable effort should be made to ensure that the majority of illiterates in the rural and interior local government communities have access to information. Similarly, Disso (1994) expressed the view that information should be seen as a basic resource for development. It is one thing to generate information and it is another to use it. Information utilization is a resultant effect of information communication (Yaya and Ebunuwele (2007). Information awareness and utilization, especially financial information may lead to unprecedented development.

### **Concept of Development**

Development is conceptualized as the qualitative improvement in the living standard of the majority of the people through the provision of economic and social infrastructures like industries, employment, water, electricity, health facilities, good roads, etc, etc.( Okereke 2003:1)

The foregoing quotation has listed some of the most important development indicators. Development could also be seen as "the qualitative improvement of the living standard of members of the society" (Okereke 2003 p. 10) which is measured by such indicators as literacy rate, rate of employment, the distribution of income, availability of portable drinking water, good roads, regular supply of electricity, decent housing, medicare, and not only having them but also having access to them. To effectively do this, the public sector or the public service represented by the local government functionaries is the instrument available to the states and the nation to achieve the purpose.

Development is important to human existence. Request for creation of states by different sections of Nigeria is premised on this. Perceived marginalization and the conception or misconception that creation of States brings rapid development to the benefiting areas, are two major reasons for the agitation for more states (Punch 2010). According to Bankole, a one time Speaker of the House of Representatives "over 40 state creation requests are pending at the National Assembly" (Okereke, 2003:14). These underscore the need for development of the local governments. Economic development, which is the concern of this project, "is about assisting an entire community to rise up, helping people to live better individually and as neighbours" (Temali, 2002: 2). Temali quoting Ted Wysocki defined economic development as "connecting the dots between people, land, and money. It's building on your local assets to improve your local economy. It's both assisting businesses to grow and residents to improve their income". The two goals of economic development are to improve the economic situation of local residents and to enhance the community's quality of life as a whole. These are basically achievable by the provision of social infrastructures which are the amenities for empowerment and subsequent employment.

### **Information and Citizenry Empowerment**

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets (PovertyNet)

Empowerment is a noun and its verb form is “empower”. To empower means, “to give official authority or legal power to; to promote the self-actualization or influence of” individuals or a group (Webster’s Dictionary, 1998:378). *International Encyclopedia of Social Science* (1968:1621) defines empowerment as “strengthening, capacity development, ability to do anything that the community or organization wants”.

The World Bank’s 2002 Empowerment Sourcebook identified empowerment as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”. It is a process of increasing the assets and capabilities of individuals or groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Empowerment is power to speak about a change in condition of existence. It cuts across all spheres of life that need improvement or change. Empowerment implies the concept of power. There are different types of power as outlined by Malena (2003) as personal, political, economic, social, and intellectual. There are also different sources of this power such as knowledge, rights, political authority, money and assets, gender and social status as outlined by Malena. Of all these sources of empowerment this paper addresses and narrows down to economic power whose source of energy is infrastructure.

### Research Design

Survey design was employed in this study because it is best used to find out the opinion of a group of people towards a particular issue at a particular time. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the required number of respondents proportionately selected from 13 out of 27 local governments in Imo State, Nigeria.

The 27 local governments have a total population of three million nine hundred and thirty-four thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine (3, 934, 899) (NBS 2008; Nigeriamasterweb.com, 2006) distributed in its three senatorial zones. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the finite number to be used. Using Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) recommendation of 384 samples for a population of 200, 000; this research was supposed to make use of 1, 841 but for easy calculation one figure was dropped leaving 1, 840 as the figure sampled. This 1840 was proportionally calculated from the population size of each of the 13 local governments used. Using Aboh Mbaize local government as an example; the total population is 196, 652; 50% of the population is 98, 326; population used in the research as calculated under is 189.

Uzuagulu’s statistical formula adopted in Uhegbu (2004:102) was adopted to arrive at the formula used in selecting the population size for each of the 13 local governments.

The formula is expressed as:

$$\frac{n \times p}{N \times 1}$$

Where in this paper n = Total Sample Size = 1, 840; N = Total Number of Population to Sample = 959, 213; and P = Total Number of Population to be sampled in each of the 13 LGs. So to get the sample size for Aboh Mbaize, the mathematical application becomes:

$$\frac{1\,840 \times 98,326}{959,213 \times 1} \\ = 189 \text{ Approx.}$$

This formula was applied to all the 13 local governments to get each local government’s discrete number from the 1840 sample size.

### The Result

This section presents the data generated from the questionnaire. The results are presented in tables, frequencies and percentages, as well as in graphs, for easier understanding using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, 15<sup>th</sup> edition (SPSS). Of the 1840 questionnaires distributed to all the categories of respondents, 1785 were retrieved while 55 could not be retrieved; this made a response rate of 95%. It is based on the data from the 1785 retrieved copies of questionnaire that the following presentation has been made.

#### Demographic data of respondents

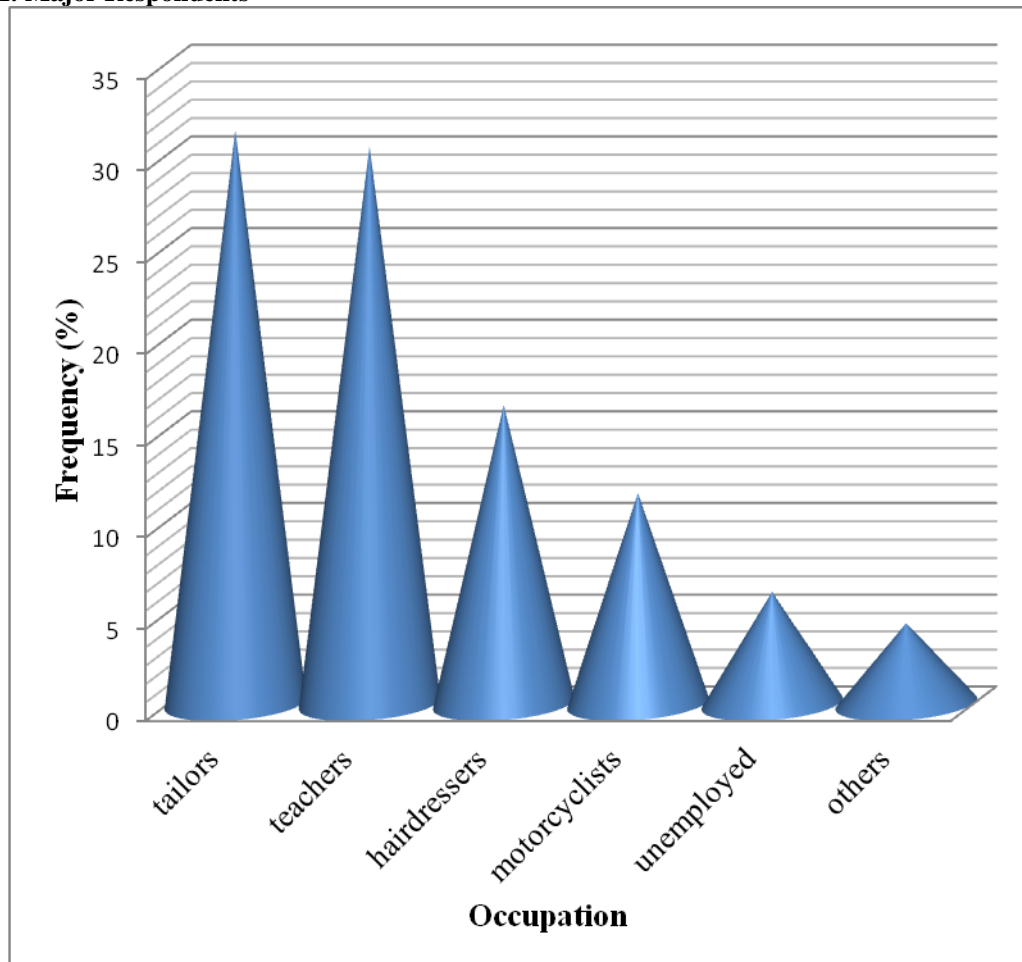
Emphasis will not be laid on demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Majority of the respondents (767; 43.0%) were between 31-40 years while the least population of the sample (19; ≈ 1%) were within the age bracket of 15-20 years. Thus, majority of the respondents were of productive age of less than 64 years. The least educated respondents (271; 15.2%) had Primary Six Education. Majority of the respondents (680; 38.1%) had SSCE/GCE and 25 percent of the respondents were university graduates or HND holders.

### Occupational distribution of respondents

The respondents to this study occupied 17 occupational areas with the majority being in the purposively selected occupational categories of Tailors (559; 31.3%), Teachers (542; 30.4%), Hairdressers (291; 16.3%), and Motorcyclists/Okada riders (206; 11.5%) as shown in Figure 1. The least occupational distribution in the list of respondents were the Civil Servants, Directors and Nurses.

**Figure I: Major Respondents**



### Methods used by the local governments to communicate their financial and other information to citizens

Here, sources of local government's financial information data were obtained.

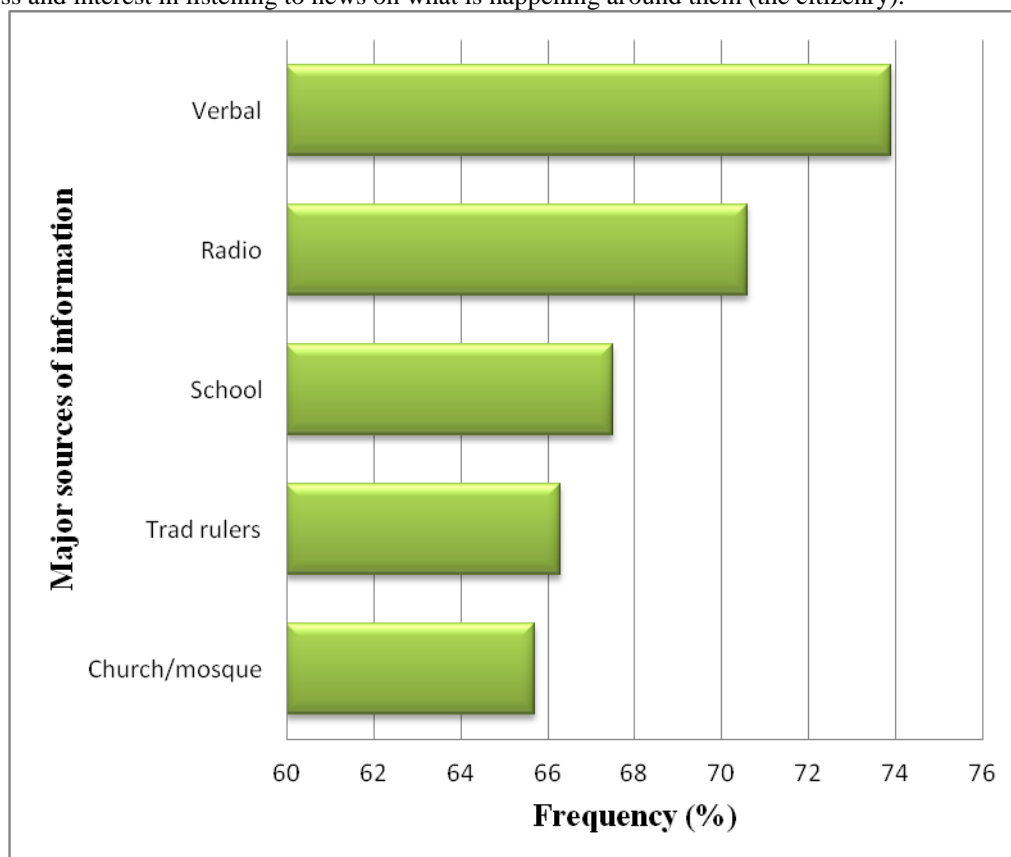
**Table 1: Sources of local government financial information for the citizens**

S/N	Sources of information	Agree	Disagree
1	Verbally/orally from friends and relatives	1320 (73.9%)	465 (26.1%)
2	Radio broadcast	1260 (70.6%)	525 (29.4%)
3	Television (TV)	909 (50.9%)	876 (49.1%)
4	Newspaper/Magazine	802 (44.9%)	983 (55.1%)
5	School	1204 (67.5%)	581 (32.5%)
6	Church or Mosque	1173 (65.7%)	612 (34.3%)
7	Town Criers	1078 (60.4%)	707 (39.6%)
8	Library/Information Centre	698 (39.1%)	1087 (60.9%)
9	Community/Village Meeting	1058 (59.3%)	727 (40.7%)
10	Telephone/Handset	637 (35.7%)	1148 (64.3%)
11	Internet	595 (33.3%)	1190 (66.7%)
12	Traditional Ruler	1183 (66.3%)	602 (33.7%)
13	Ward Councillor	1088 (61.0%)	697 (39.0%)
14	Local Government	1072 (60.1%)	713 (39.9%)

Source: Field data, 2011

N=1785

Table 1 and Figure 2 indicate that over 60 percent of the respondents got information about their local governments' finances from verbal/oral sources, Radio broadcasts, schools, churches or mosques, traditional rulers and ward councillors. Less than 50 percent of the respondents got the required local governments' financial information from newspapers or magazines, libraries or information centres, telephones or handsets, and the internet. Oral face to face communication has been seen in literature as the most preferred method of communication especially in the rural areas (Adeyemi (1991), Alemna (1995), and Munyua (2000). The mass media, particularly the radio was also a popular source of information for citizenry. This suggests a high level of awareness and interest in listening to news on what is happening around them (the citizenry).



**Figure 2: Major Sources of Citizens' Information About Their Local Government**



The five most important local governments' information communication channels indicated in Figure 2 needed to be more effectively utilized by the local governments for effective communication of financial information to the citizens because radios, churches, and schools were the most common and available communication channels for the common people in the villages.

#### Data on infrastructural development

**Table 2: Infrastructural development**

S/N	Facilities that can make respondents stay and work in their villages	Yes	No
1	Slaughter house/abattoir	802 (44.9%)	983 (55.1%)
2	Electricity	1251 (70.1%)	534 (29.9%)
3	Pipe borne water	1227 (68.7%)	558 (31.3%)
4	Market stores	1306 (73.2%)	479 (26.3%)
5	School	1307 (73.2%)	478 (26.8%)
6	Company/factory	1326 (74.3%)	459 (25.7%)
7	Hospital	1490 (83.5%)	295 (16.5%)
8	Good road	1483 (83.1%)	303 (16.9%)
9	Police station	1422 (79.7%)	363 (20.3%)
10	Library/information centre	1248 (69.9%)	537 (30.1%)
11	Internet facility	1280 (71.7%)	505 (28.3%)
12	Church	1351 (75.7%)	434 (24.3%)
13	Computer centre	1268 (71.0%)	517 (29.0%)
14	Telephone accessibility	1023 (57.3%)	762 (42.7%)
15	Recreation centre	1076 (60.3%)	709 (39.7%)

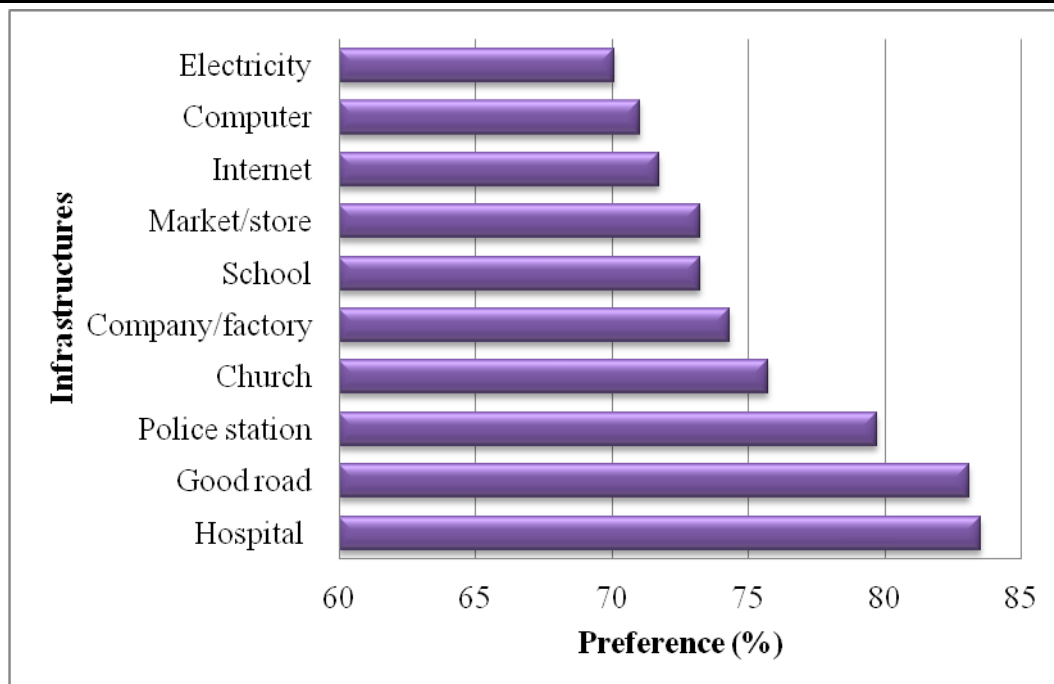
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From Table 2, infrastructures like slaughter houses or abattoirs, electricity, pipe borne water, and market stores would respectively make 802 (44.9%), 1251 (70.1%), 1227 (68.7%) and 1306 (73.2%) respondents to stay and work in their villages. However, these respective factors would make 983 (55.1%), 534 (29.9%), 558 (31.3%), and 479 (26.3%) corresponding respondents to stay and work in their villages.

Also, availability of schools, companies or factories, hospitals, and good roads would make 1307 (73.2%), 1326 (74.3%), 1490 (83.5%), and 1483 (83.1%) corresponding respondents to stay and work in their villages. Respectively, 478 (26.8%), 459 (25.7%), 295 (16.5%), and 303 (16.9%) respondents preferred not to stay and work in their villages even if the aforementioned infrastructure were provided by their local governments.

Furthermore, availability of police stations, libraries and information centres, Internet facilities, and Churches would make 1422 (79.7%), 1248 (69.9%), 1280 (71.7%), and 1351 (75.7%) respective respondents stay and work in their villages. Conversely, the provision of the foregoing infrastructure would not make 363 (20.3%), 537 (30.1%), 505 (28.3%), and 434 (24.3%) corresponding populations of respondents to stay and work in their villages.

Finally, provision of computer centres, telephone networks, and recreation centres would likely make 1268 (71.0%), 1023 (57.3%), and 1076 (60.3%) corresponding respondents to stay and work in their villages. However, provision of these facilities would not encourage 517 (29.0%), 762 (42.7%), and 709 (39.7%) populations of respondents to stay and work in their villages.



**Figure 3: Major Infrastructure That Would Induce Citizens to Stay and Establish in Their Villages**  
**What is the level of the citizens' local government financial information awareness in Imo State?**

Although the level of awareness of Federal allocations to the local governments was high and implied that the consulted populace were reasonably informed about the matter (68.5%), 31.5 percent level of ignorance about inflow of revenue from the Federal to the local governments was too significantly high to be ignored. It simply meant that there was an equally high-level ignorance among the populations of the local governments in this regard. For 70.5% of citizenry to indicate unawareness of how much their local government receives from the Federation account and 68.6% being not aware of how much its local government receives from the State was a serious matter. How can there be accountability and transparency when financial information is shroud in obscurity?

The majority of the citizenry were ignorant of the volume of resources that flowed to the understudied local governments from the various sources.

**What is the relationship between local government financial transaction and empowerment of citizens in those local government areas in Imo State?**

**Table 3: Citizenry Awareness of Local Government Income and Infrastructural Provision**

		YES	NO
1	If the citizens are aware of LG income, will it enhance LG infrastructural provision?	1275 (71.4%)	510 (28.6%)
2	If the citizens are involved in LG administration will there be infrastructural provision?	1175 (65.8%)	610 (34.2%)
3	If the citizens are aware of LG income will it less misappropriation from the executives?	1245 (69.7%)	540 (30.3%)
4	If the citizens are involved in LG management infrastructure will be adequately provided	1268 (71%)	517 (29%)
5	Citizens' awareness of LG income enhances infrastructural development	1418 (79.4%)	367 (20.6%)
6	Has the LG provided your request or the request of your community before?	1245 (69.7%)	540 (30.3%)
7	If you are involved in LG activities will you support them with some infrastructure?	1161 (65%)	624 (35%)
8	Will you be happy to help if you are aware of what the LG is doing?	1245 (69.7%)	540 (30.3%)

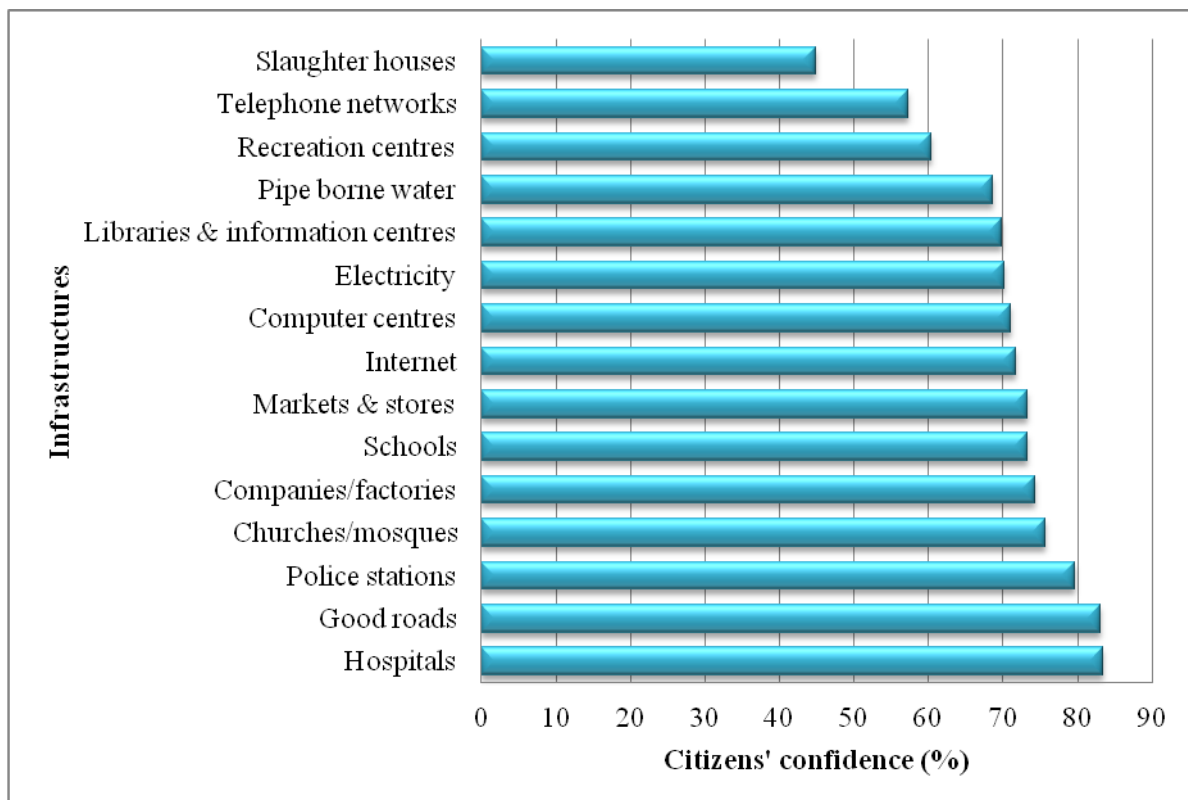
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From Table 3, it is very evident that citizens' awareness of financial information of the local governments could enhance local governments' provision of infrastructure which empowers the citizens. 71.4% of the citizenry believed that their awareness of financial information from the local government would lead to provision of infrastructure and 79.4% said that it would lead to development of infrastructure; 65.8% and 79.4% respectively believed that citizens' involvement in administration and in management would definitely lead to local government's provision of infrastructure.

### Infrastructure That Can Create Employment

Respondents were asked to respond on the infrastructure that could generate employment or they would like to have in their local governments; the infrastructure that would compel them to stay in their villages if they have them. Fifteen of such were listed for them to choose from.



**Figure 4: Needed Infrastructure for Employment**

It is important to state that the foregoing indicated that inadequate availability of infrastructure adversely affected citizens' empowerment in choice of actions in the villages of the 13 understudied local government areas. The citizens were not ignorant of the fact that availability of the identified infrastructure would provide employment for them in addition to making life enjoyable. To this end, therefore, it is safe to state that the citizens of the understudied local government areas were very convinced of the high potentials in infrastructure to provide employment for them. However, even though the majority of the respondents indicated that some of these infrastructures were adequately supplied, there were evidences that the citizens were not yet significantly satisfied with the levels of the provision of the infrastructures. Out of the 15 listed infrastructure, only 4 scored less than 70% in being necessary for employment.

### Discussion Of Findings

#### Information Dissemination Channels

Citizens' major channels of information about their local governments' finances included oral conversation with more informed friends, relatives or fellow citizens (73.9%), Radio broadcasts (70.6%), schools (67.5%), traditional rulers (66.3%), churches or mosques (65.7%), and ward councillors (61.0%). This conformed with Martin (2003) and Albert and Isife (2010) who advocated that the best communication channels to reach the rural communities are through local leaders, development councils, churches, schools, and individuals. Among

the worst sources of information included the print media (44.9%), libraries or information centres (39.1%), and the Internet (33.3%).

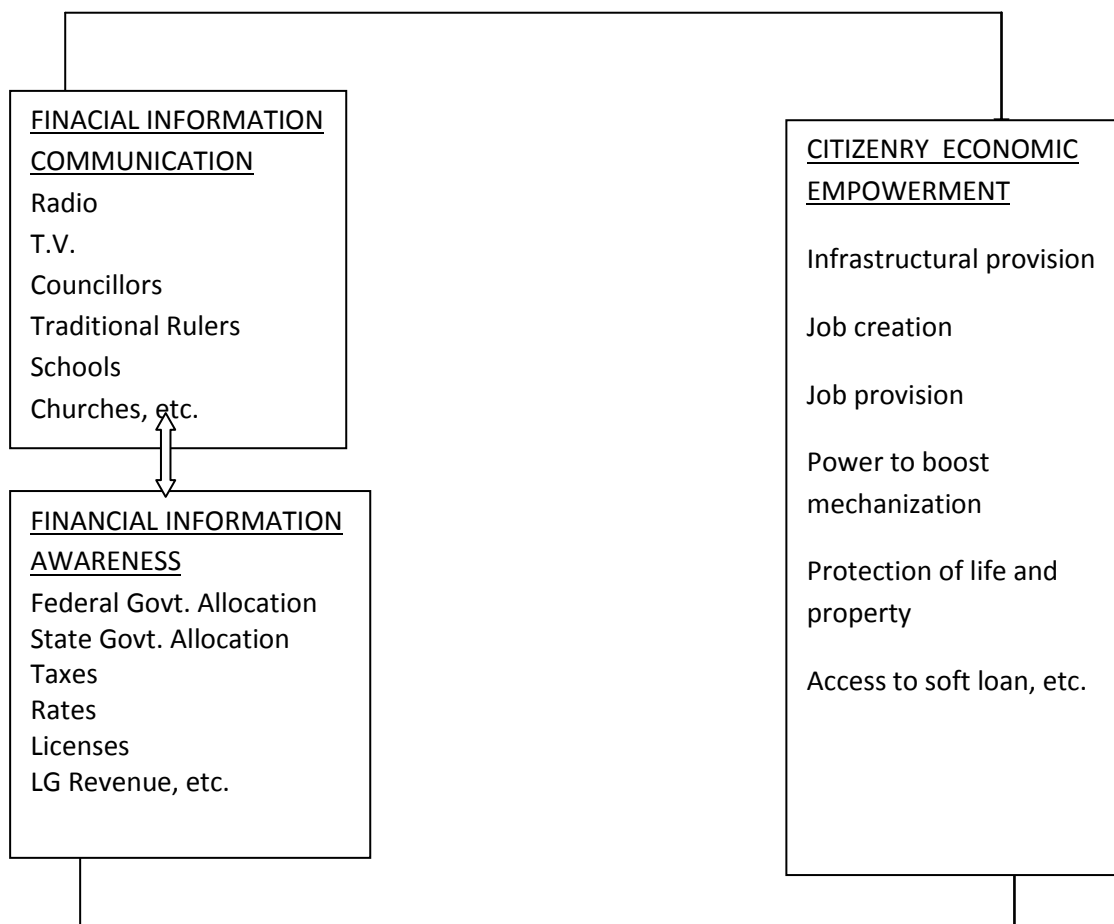
The local governments used opinion leaders, traditional rulers, village heads, and councillors to disseminate information about their management. Also, the local governments reached out to their citizenry through village meetings to pass information across to the citizenry in the village areas. Citizens' awareness of local governments' financial information is very limited. They have a good knowledge of the importance of infrastructure in helping to provide employment.

### Model Developed from the Study

At this juncture, we shall devise a model for this work that shows the expected relationship that should exist between the local government and its citizens and how such relationship influences infrastructural development and affects citizens' empowerment.

This model depicts a predictable connection between financial information awareness and financial information communication on one hand, and infrastructural development and citizenry empowerment on the other.

### MODEL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – CITIZENRY FINANCIAL INFORMATION COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS AND EMPOWERMENT



### Interpretation of the Model

The Model has three compartments (1) Financial Information Awareness (2) Financial Information Communication, and (3) Citizenry Economic Empowerment. Boxes one and two are congruent that is why a two-way arrow is used to intersect them. Financial information communication and Awareness either separately or collectively can lead to citizenry economic empowerment.

Upon release of financial information from the local governments to the citizenry through any media – the radio, the television, the councillors, the traditional rulers, the schools, etc. barring all foreseen or unforeseen intervening variables, the citizenry may inquire of the use made of such income. Even when the Local

Government's management decides not to release or communicate their financial information to their citizenry for any reason best known to them the citizens may still be aware of the local government's incomes from Federal and State allocations through federal government press releases. The citizenry pay taxes, rates, and buy vehicle licenses. Without being communicated they are aware that the local governments generate funds internally.

If the local government's administration notices that the citizens may demand the use made of the funds received and generated by the local government, the administrators may utilize the funds to provide their civic responsibility which is the provision of infrastructure. When infrastructure, which includes accessible roads, electricity, good drinking water, market stores, schools, police stations, recreational centres, libraries, etc., is provided the citizens are empowered with enabling environment and facilities to be self-employed or even to get employment as a result of the infrastructure provided. Empowerment involves, among other things, power to boost mechanization and this is possible when there is electricity; empowerment involves infrastructural service to encourage or enhance self-help effort of the citizens according to Pigg and Bradshaw in RSS Issue Brief 2006. Lots of unnecessary expenses are saved as a result of infrastructure.

Infrastructure provides and creates jobs. The local government areas' reward is increased development and revenue collection from her citizens who are gainfully employed. The basis for this vicious monetary income is the communication by the local government of its income and awareness by the citizens of that financial income. The economic situations of the citizens may be improved as well as their quality of life.

### Summary and Conclusion

Applying the social survey design, using the validated, reliable, and structured questionnaire, to the understudied population, this research made the following findings:

- (a) Although the understudied citizenry could be said to be aware of the finances of their local governments, there was an appreciably high-level of ignorance among the populations of the local government areas with regard to local government revenue acquisition, with that of internally generated revenue being the worst circulated.
- (b) The administrators of the various local governments understudied in this research did not make their citizenry become aware of how they applied the revenues that accrued to the local governments, therefore, most of the citizens of the local governments were ignorant of how their local governments administration spent the accrued resources.
- (c) The citizenry communicated with their local governments by proxy attendance of local government's meetings. Citizens majorly interact with their local governments' executives through their councillors, traditional rulers, and village leaders during village meetings, and through radio. Other media were mildly used.
- (d) The research found out that there is a significant relationship between local government's financial information communication and citizenry financial information awareness.
- (e) A model has been developed to show how a local government should relate with its citizens to ensure cordiality and equitable development.

### Conclusion

From the findings, availability of local governments' financial information to the public, that is, to the citizens, would make the government to utilize the resources for local government development by providing infrastructure such as electricity, good roads, pipe borne water, and to employ more workers while improving employed workers salaries. The research further discovered that there is a positive relationship between citizens' financial information awareness and citizenry empowerment through infrastructural development and hence job provision or employment. But information was limited and so was the expected empowerment. From the findings, the following recommendations have become necessary.

Sources of information on local government activities were numerous but the availability of financial information has been limited. Therefore it is recommended that the local governments increase the flow of financial information to their citizens because it will help in the process of citizenry empowerment. The five major information dissemination methods embraced by the respondents - village leaders, traditional rulers, verbally through friends, schools, and churches/mosques – should be effectively utilized to also disseminate local government's financial information.

Local government Wards should appoint representatives who would serve as their eyes in the local governments to harness information from the local governments for the Wards they represent. This is because the citizens do not have confidence with the government political appointees bringing local government's information to them.

As of compulsion, every local government should make available, for public consumption, the finances that accrue to it and its plans on their utilization since this transparency helps in minimizing corruption. The federal government should pass a law making it compulsory for the local governments to make their activities and plans known to their people. Every local government should be made to publish their financial involvement every quarter for public consumption.

Again a model of the relationship that should exist between local governments and its citizens to ensure empowerment and development has emerged. Not only will it be useful in Imo State in particular but in Nigeria and to the developing countries in general.

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